

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 JIDDA 07871 070806Z

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6527

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 7871

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

FOR ASST SEC ATHERTON AND PM DIRECTOR VEST

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SA, US

SUBJECT: COMMAND AND CONTROL (USMTM)

1. AS YOU KNOW, DEFENSE HAS BEEN INTERESTED FOR SOME TIME IN BRINGING OUR VARIOUS MILITARY TRAINING COMPONENTS IN SAUDI ARABIA, AND THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS, UNDER THE COMMAND AND CONTROL OF THE CHIEF OF US MILITARY TRAINING MISSION (USMTM) WHOSE RANK WOULD BE RAISED TO THAT OF MAJOR GENERAL. ASSUME NO CHANGE IN CHIEF USMTM STATUS AS MEMBER OF STAFF OF AMBASSDOR.

2. I HAVE NO OBJECTION, PROVIDED SAG INFORMED IN ADVANCE OF ELEVATION OF CHIEF USMTM TO HIGHER RANK AND TO COMMAND AND CONTROL FUNCTIONS OVER OTHER US COMPONENTS AND DOES NOT POSE OBJECTIONS.

3. YOU ARE NO DOUBT AWARE THAT SAUDIS HAVE DISPLAYED AMBIVALENT ATTITUDES TOWARD DIFFERENT TRAINING MISSIONS, TENDING TO FAVOR ENGINEERS IN VARIOUS WAYS, AND MINISTRY OF DEFENSE HAS PREVENTED CIVILIAN MINISTRIES FROM DEVELOPING COOPERATION WITH ENGINEERS. USMTM, THROUGH NO FAULT OF ITS OWN, IN MY OPINION, HAS HAD THE HARDEST ROW TO HOE, AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SAUDI DEFENSE HIERARCHY WILL HAVE SOME QUESTIONS AS TO THE MEANING OF THIS MOVE.

4. WHILE NORMALLY OUR COMMAND AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE MATTERS FOR U.S. DECISION ONLY, I BELIEVE
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IT WOULD BE WISE TO INFORM SAUDIS OF THIS PROPOSAL PRIOR TO

PUTTING IT INTO EFFECT.

5. I HOPE YOU WILL ALSO CONSIDER POSSIBLE EFFECT OF PUBLICITY ON SAUDI HOSTS. THERE ARE THOSE, INCLUDING SOVIETS, WHO CARRY ON A STEADY VILIFICATION OF SAUDI-US RELATIONSHIP AND WHO WOULD PROBABLY DESCRIBE THIS PROMOTION-COMMAND-CONTROL DEVELOPMENT AS ESTABLISHMENT OF MAJOR US COMMAND IN SAUDI ARABIA AS ATTESTED BY FACT THAT SENIOR OFFICER'S RANK TO BE RAISED TO THAT OF MAJOR GENERAL. EFFECT OF ANY SUCH PUBLICITY ON SAUDIS CAN BE IMAGINED. AMONG OTHER THINGS, IT COULD AFFECT ADVERSELY POSSIBILITY OF ENLISTING THEIR SUPPORT FOR MIDEASTFOR TO REMAIN IN BAHRAIN. MIDEASTFOR SHOULD OF COURSE BE DEALT WITH AS SEPARATE SUBJECT, BUT WE KNOW FROM EXPERIENCE THAT SEPARATE CONSIDERATION OF MILITARY PROBLEMS IN THIS AREA IS NOT ALWAYS EASY TO ACHIEVE.

6. AS I HOPE TO CALL ON SAUDI DEFENSE MINISTER IN NEAR FUTURE, I WOULD BE PLEASED TO HAVE SUCH GUIDANCE AS YOU CAN PROVIDE. I BELIEVE DEFENSE SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO ADDRESS VARIOUS POINTS MADE IN THIS CABLE, AND I RECOMMEND YOU WITHOLD AGREEMENT UNTIL WE HAVE THOROUGHLY EXPLORED EFFECT, IF ANY, ON SAUDIS OF THIS DEVELOPMENT.

7. THE GIST OF PARAGRAPHS 1, 2, 4 AND 5 ARE BEING PASSED TO USMTM TO USE IN REPLYING TO A MESSAGE FROMUSCINCEUR ON THE COMMAND AND CONTROL SUBJECT. THE CINCEUR MESSAGE (DTG 290845Z NOV 76) IS BEING REPEATED BY SEPTTEL TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR INFORMATION.
PORTER

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